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## EC69-1199 Shopping for a Waste Disposer

Clara Leopold

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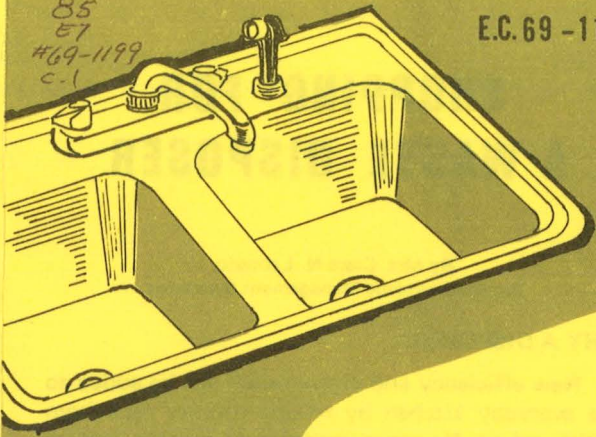
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# Shopping for a waste Disposer

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Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nebraska  
College of Agriculture and Home Economics,  
and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating  
E. F. Frolik, Dean; J. L. Adams, Director

# SHOPPING FOR A WASTE DISPOSER

By Mrs. Clara N. Leopold  
Extension Home Management Specialist

## WHY A DISPOSER?

New efficiency and convenience can be added to the everyday kitchen by freeing counter tops from untidy refuse. No more wrapping of garbage, and no more frequent and irritating trips to the garbage can. Just scrape the leftovers and refuse into the sink. Unsightly cans no longer need to clutter the back entrance or the kitchen.

Few appliances give such a pleasant lift to daily housework routine. And no appliance requires less care, for a disposer scours itself clean with constant grinding of rough food wastes.

## TYPES OF DISPOSERS

There are two types of waste disposers—continuous-feed and batch-feed. The continuous-feed type does what its name implies—waste is fed into it continuously. Just turn on cold water, flip a conveniently located switch. Food waste is pushed through the baffle. A flexible back-splash baffle covers the sink opening. Some splash guards are removable, some are not. A removable splash guard makes it easier to retrieve bottle caps, silver and such, which may inadvertently fall into the machine—and to clear out waste in case of a jam.

The batch-feed unit grinds a limited batch of waste at one time. There is no back-splash baffle; instead there is a stopper that acts as a switch that turns the unit on and off. Cold water is turned on and the stopper is given a twist to start the grinding process. A reverse twist of the cover shuts off the motor, and another load can be put in.

The batch-feed disposer has the safety advantage in that it runs only when the stopper is in place and nothing but water can enter the line during operation, but it does make the appliance less convenient to use.

Disposers, for the most part, are self-cleaning. It is usually advisable to flush the disposer after the waste



grinding is finished.

Life of a disposer is anywhere from 7 to 10 years if it is of good quality, has proper use, no abuse, suitable maintenance and normal repairs.

## **INSTALLATION**

Some plumbing and electrical work is required to install a waste disposer. Today's disposers fit any sink with a standard four-inch drain opening. They drain into the household's main waste system (sewer or septic tank). In older houses particularly, the pitch of the drain pipes may need to be increased to minimize accumulation of waste materials in the pipes. The pitch of the drain pipe should be at least 1/4 inch per foot run.

It is recommended that a disposer be on a separate 120 volt 20 ampere AC circuit, with a time delay fuse or circuit breaker to cut off power in the event of system's overload, as when a jam occurs. The disposer should also be grounded.

A few models have an automatic reset; others require a manual reset after the jam has been cleared. Some also have a reversing switch built into the housing; others have an automatic reversal action each time the unit is started.

It is possible to combine a disposer and dishwasher installation if dishwasher is fused for 20 amperes and local electrical codes permit. If a dishwasher is to be added later, the electrician should know this in advance—he can install the circuit for the disposer so that a minimum of additional wiring will be required for the dishwasher.

The wisest course is to obtain an estimate on installation costs before buying.

## **INSULATION FOR NOISE**

A food grinder isn't expected to be whisper silent, and none are. But some are quieter than others. In general, machines designed to run with their stoppers in place seal in much of the grinding noise; but the most effective noise-suppression is achieved by adequate sound-absorbing jackets.

## **OPERATING COSTS**

In purchase price, the continuous-feed usually costs less than the batch-feed, but this saving is usually offset by the extra cost of installing a separate switch for the continuous-feed model.

A 1/3 to 1/4 horsepower motor is all that is generally necessary for a disposer. The electrical cost is nominal. It runs about one minute per day per person.

The necessary cold water should flow at about 1-1/2 to 2 gallons per minute. A disposer uses about 1-1/2 to 2 gallons per person per day.

## **USE WITH SEPTIC TANK?**

The U. S. Public Health Service reports that both disposers and dishwashers can be used successfully with septic tanks, if the septic tank meets the Minimum Property Standards of FHA. U. S. Public Health Service, on which FHA relies, indicates that a disposer increases the amount of solids fed into a septic tank so the tank may need to be cleaned more frequently if it isn't to fail prematurely. A 25% larger absorption field is needed to handle added water volume.

## **WHICHEVER YOUR CHOICE**

Buy a recognized brand.

Buy from a reputable local dealer who will properly install it.

Ask for complete demonstration and operating instructions at time of installation—including directions for restarting should an overload switch it off.

Read instruction book completely and carefully. Check with dealer on any point not understood.

Always operate unit with cold water and turn on water before activating the motor.

Use a fast flow of water. Allow plenty of water to run through to dilute food waste sufficiently to avoid clogging.

Grind a combination of hard-and-soft-textured waste together.

Allow unit to run 10-15 seconds after waste disappears, and once a week flush out the drain line by filling sink with water and letting it drain out.

Never use chemical drain cleaners in disposer.

Never put in such things as tin cans, glass, broken dishes, large quantities of fruit pits, cloth, string, paper or rubber.

Look for an Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc., label to make sure that the unit is made according to electrical safety requirements needed for home safety.